

Fashion

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Source: *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 62, No. 6 (May, 1957), pp. 541-558

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2773129>

Accessed: 07-03-2018 19:26 UTC

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# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

*Volume LXII*

MAY 1957

*Number 6*

## FASHION<sup>1</sup>

GEORG SIMMEL

### ABSTRACT

Fashion is a form of imitation and so of social equalization, but, paradoxically, in changing incessantly, it differentiates one time from another and one social stratum from another. It unites those of a social class and segregates them from others. The elite initiates a fashion and, when the mass imitates it in an effort to obliterate the external distinctions of class, abandons it for a newer mode—a process that quickens with the increase of wealth. Fashion does not exist in tribal and classless societies. It concerns externals and superficialities where irrationality does no harm. It signalizes the lack of personal freedom; hence it characterizes the female and the middle class, whose increased social freedom is matched by intense individual subjugation. Some forms are intrinsically more suited to the modifications of fashion than others: the internal unity of the forms called “classic” makes them immune to change.

The general formula in accordance with which we usually interpret the differing aspects of the individual as well as of the public mind may be stated broadly as follows: We recognize two antagonistic forces, tendencies, or characteristics, either of which, if left unaffected, would approach infinity; and it is by the mutual limitation of the two forces that the characteristics of the individual and public mind result. We are constantly seeking ultimate forces, fundamental aspirations, some one of which controls our entire conduct. But in no case do we find any single force attaining a perfectly independent expression, and we are thus obliged to separate a majority of the factors and determine the relative extent to which each shall have representation. To do this we must establish the degree of limitation exercised by the counteraction of some other force, as well as the influence exerted by the latter upon the primitive force.

Man has ever had a dualistic nature. This fact, however, has had but little effect on the uniformity of his conduct, and this uniformity is usually the result of a number of elements. An action that results from less than a majority of fundamental forces would appear barren and empty. Over an old Flemish house there stands the mystical inscription, “There is more within me”; and this is the formula according to which the first impression of an action is supplemented by a far-reaching diversity of causes. Human life cannot hope to develop a wealth of inexhaustible possibilities until we come to recognize in every moment and content of existence a pair of forces, each one of which, in striving to go beyond the initial point, has resolved the infinity of the other by mutual impingement into mere tension and desire. While the explanation of some aspects of the soul as the result of the action of two fundamental forces satisfies the theoretical instinct, it furthermore adds a new charm to the image of things, not only by tracing distinctly the outlines of the fact, but also by

<sup>1</sup> *International Quarterly* (New York), X (October, 1904), 130–55. Reprinted by kind permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

interpreting the vague, often enigmatic, realization that in the creation of the life of the soul deeper forces, more unsolved tensions, more comprehensive conflicts and conciliations have been at work than their immediate reality would lead one to suppose.

There seem to be two tendencies in the individual soul as well as in society. All designations for this most general form of dualism within us undoubtedly emanate from a more or less individual example. This fundamental [131] form of life cannot be reached by exact definition; we must rest content with the separation of this primitive form from a multitude of examples, which more or less clearly reveal the really inexpressible element of this duality of our soul. The physiological basis of our being gives the first hint, for we discover that human nature requires motion and repose, receptiveness and productivity—a masculine and a feminine principle are united in every human being. This type of duality applied to our spiritual nature causes the latter to be guided by the striving towards generalization on the one hand, and on the other by the desire to describe the single, special element. Thus generalization gives rest to the soul, whereas specialization permits it to move from example to example; and the same is true in the world of feeling. On the one hand we seek peaceful surrender to men and things, on the other an energetic activity with respect to both.

The whole history of society is reflected in the striking conflicts, the compromises, slowly won and quickly lost, between socialistic adaptation to society and individual departure from its demands. We have here the provincial forms, as it were, of those great antagonistic forces which represent the foundations of our individual destiny, and in which our outer as well as our inner life, our intellectual as well as our spiritual being, find the poles of their oscillations. Whether these forces be expressed philosophically in the contrast between cosmotheism and the doctrine of inherent differentiation and separate existence of every cosmic element, or whether they be ground in practical conflict

representing socialism on the one hand or individualism on the other, we have always to deal with the same fundamental form of duality which is manifested biologically in the contrast between heredity and variation. Of these the former represents the idea of generalization, of uniformity, of inactive similarity of the forms and contents of life; the latter stands for motion, for differentiation of separate elements, producing the restless changing of an individual life. The essential forms of life in the history of our race invariably show the effectiveness of the two antagonistic principles. Each in its sphere attempts to combine the interest in duration, unity, and similarity with that in change, specialization, and peculiarity. It becomes self-evident that there is no institution, no law, no estate of life, which can uniformly satisfy the full demands of the two opposing principles. The only realization of this condition possible for humanity finds expression in constantly changing approximations, in ever retracted attempts and ever revived hopes. It is this that constitutes the whole wealth of our development, the whole incentive to advancement, the possibility of grasping a vast proportion of [132] all the infinite combinations of the elements of human character, a proportion that is approaching the unlimited itself.

Within the social embodiments of these contrasts, one side is generally maintained by the psychological tendency towards imitation. The charm of imitation in the first place is to be found in the fact that it makes possible an expedient test of power, which, however, requires no great personal and creative application, but is displayed easily and smoothly, because its content is a given quantity. We might define it as the child of thought and thoughtlessness. It affords the pregnant possibility of continually extending the greatest creations of the human spirit, without the aid of the forces which were originally the very condition of their birth. Imitation, furthermore, gives to the individual the satisfaction of not standing alone in his actions. Whenever we imitate, we transfer not only the demand for creative activ-

ity, but also the responsibility for the action from ourselves to another. Thus the individual is freed from the worry of choosing and appears simply as a creature of the group, as a vessel of the social contents.

The tendency towards imitation characterizes a stage of development in which the desire for expedient personal activity is present, but from which the capacity for possessing the individual acquirements is absent. It is interesting to note the exactness with which children insist upon the repetition of facts, how they constantly clamor for a repetition of the same games and pastimes, how they will object to the slightest variation in the telling of a story they have heard twenty times. In this imitation and in exact adaptation to the past the child first rises above its momentary existence; the immediate content of life reaches into the past, it expands the present for the child, likewise for primitive man; and the pedantic exactness of this adaptation to the given formula need not be regarded offhand as a token of poverty or narrowness. At this stage every deviation from imitation of the given facts breaks the connection which alone can now unite the present with something that is more than the present, something that tends to expand existence as a mere creature of the moment. The advance beyond this stage is reflected in the circumstance that our thoughts, actions, and feelings are determined by the future as well as by fixed, past, and traditional factors: the teleological individual represents the counterpole of the imitative mortal. The imitator is the passive individual, who believes in social similarity and adapts himself to existing elements; the teleological individual, on the other hand, is ever experimenting, always restlessly striving, and he relies on his own personal conviction.

Thus we see that imitation in all the instances where it is a productive factor represents one of the fundamental tendencies of our character, [133] namely, that which contents itself with similarity, with uniformity, with the adaptation of the special to the general, and accentuates the constant element

in change. Conversely, wherever prominence is given to change, wherever individual differentiation, independence, and relief from generality are sought, there imitation is the negative and obstructive principle. The principle of adherence to given formulas, of being and of acting like others, is irreconcilably opposed to the striving to advance to ever new and individual forms of life; for this very reason social life represents a battle-ground, of which every inch is stubbornly contested, and social institutions may be looked upon as the peace-treaties, in which the constant antagonism of both principles has been reduced externally to a form of coöperation.

The vital conditions of fashion as a universal phenomenon in the history of our race are circumscribed by these conceptions. Fashion is the imitation of a given example and satisfies the demand for social adaptation; it leads the individual upon the road which all travel, it furnishes a general condition, which resolves the conduct of every individual into a mere example. At the same time it satisfies in no less degree the need of differentiation, the tendency towards dissimilarity, the desire for change and contrast, on the one hand by a constant change of contents, which gives to the fashion of to-day an individual stamp as opposed to that of yesterday and of to-morrow, on the other hand because fashions differ for different classes—the fashions of the upper stratum of society are never identical with those of the lower; in fact, they are abandoned by the former as soon as the latter prepares to appropriate them. Thus fashion represents nothing more than one of the many forms of life by the aid of which we seek to combine in uniform spheres of activity the tendency towards social equalization with the desire for individual differentiation and change. Every phase of the conflicting pair strives visibly beyond the degree of satisfaction that any fashion offers to an absolute control of the sphere of life in question. If we should study the history of fashions (which hitherto have been examined only from the view-point of the development of their con-

tents) in connection with their importance for the form of the social process, we should find that it reflects the history of the attempts to adjust the satisfaction of the two counter-tendencies more and more perfectly to the condition of the existing individual and social culture. The various psychological elements in fashion all conform to this fundamental principle.

Fashion, as noted above, is a product of class distinction and operates like a number of other forms, honor especially, the double function of which consists in revolving within a given circle and at the same time emphasizing it as separate from others. Just as the frame of a picture characterizes [134] the work of art inwardly as a coherent, homogeneous, independent entity and at the same time outwardly severs all direct relations with the surrounding space, just as the uniform energy of such forms cannot be expressed unless we determine the double effect, both inward and outward, so honor owes its character, and above all its moral rights, to the fact that the individual in his personal honor at the same time represents and maintains that of his social circle and his class. These moral rights, however, are frequently considered unjust by those without the pale. Thus fashion on the one hand signifies union with those in the same class, the uniformity of a circle characterized by it, and, *uno actu*, the exclusion of all other groups.

Union and segregation are the two fundamental functions which are here inseparably united, and one of which, although or because it forms a logical contrast to the other, becomes the condition of its realization. Fashion is merely a product of social demands, even though the individual object which it creates or recreates may represent a more or less individual need. This is clearly proved by the fact that very frequently not the slightest reason can be found for the creations of fashion from the standpoint of an objective, aesthetic, or other expediency. While in general our wearing apparel is really adapted to our needs, there is not a trace of expediency in the method by which

fashion dictates, for example, whether wide or narrow trousers, colored or black scarfs shall be worn. As a rule the material justification for an action coincides with its general adoption, but in the case of fashion there is a complete separation of the two elements, and there remains for the individual only this general acceptance as the deciding motive to appropriate it. Judging from the ugly and repugnant things that are sometimes in vogue, it would seem as though fashion were desirous of exhibiting its power by getting us to adopt the most atrocious things for its sake alone. The absolute indifference of fashion to the material standards of life is well illustrated by the way in which it recommends something appropriate in one instance, something abstruse in another, and something materially and aesthetically quite indifferent in a third. The only motivations with which fashion is concerned are formal social ones. The reason why even aesthetically impossible styles seem *distingué*, elegant, and artistically tolerable when affected by persons who carry them to the extreme, is that the persons who do this are generally the most elegant and pay the greatest attention to their personal appearance, so that under any circumstances we would get the impression of something *distingué* and aesthetically cultivated. This impression we credit to the questionable element of fashion, the latter appealing to our consciousness as the new and consequently most conspicuous feature of the *tout ensemble*.

[135] Fashion occasionally will accept objectively determined subjects such as religious faith, scientific interests, even socialism and individualism; but it does not become operative as fashion until these subjects can be considered independent of the deeper human motives from which they have risen. For this reason the rule of fashion becomes in such fields unendurable. We therefore see that there is good reason why externals—clothing, social conduct, amusements—constitute the specific field of fashion, for here no dependence is placed on really vital motives of human action. It is the field which we can most easily relinquish

to the bent towards imitation, which it would be a sin to follow in important questions. We encounter here a close connection between the consciousness of personality and that of the material forms of life, a connection that runs all through history. The more objective our view of life has become in the last centuries, the more it has stripped the picture of nature of all subjective and anthropomorphic elements, and the more sharply has the conception of individual personality become defined. The social regulation of our inner and outer life is a sort of embryo condition, in which the contrasts of the purely personal and the purely objective are differentiated, the action being synchronous and reciprocal. Therefore wherever man appears essentially as a social being we observe neither strict objectivity in the view of life nor absorption and independence in the consciousness of personality.

Social forms, apparel, aesthetic judgment, the whole style of human expression, are constantly transformed by fashion, in such a way, however, that fashion—*i.e.*, the latest fashion—in all these things affects only the upper classes. Just as soon as the lower classes begin to copy their style, thereby crossing the line of demarcation the upper classes have drawn and destroying the uniformity of their coherence, the upper classes turn away from this style and adopt a new one, which in its turn differentiates them from the masses; and thus the game goes merrily on. Naturally the lower classes look and strive towards the upper, and they encounter the least resistance in those fields which are subject to the whims of fashion; for it is here that mere external imitation is most readily applied. The same process is at work as between the different sets within the upper classes, although it is not always as visible here as it is, for example, between mistress and maid. Indeed, we may often observe that the more nearly one set has approached another, the more frantic becomes the desire for imitation from below and the seeking for the new from above. The increase of wealth is bound to hasten the process considerably and render it visible, be-

cause the objects of fashion, embracing as they do the externals of life, are most accessible to the mere call of money, and conformity to the higher set [136] is more easily acquired here than in fields which demand an individual test that gold and silver cannot affect.

We see, therefore, that in addition to the element of imitation the element of demarcation constitutes an important factor of fashion. This is especially noticeable wherever the social structure does not include any super-imposed groups, in which case fashion asserts itself in neighboring groups. Among primitive peoples we often find that closely connected groups living under exactly similar conditions develop sharply differentiated fashions, by means of which each group establishes uniformity within, as well as difference without the prescribed set. On the other hand, there exists a wide-spread predilection for importing fashions from without, and such foreign fashions assume a greater value within the circle, simply because they did not originate there. The prophet Zephaniah expressed his indignation at the aristocrats who affected imported apparel. As a matter of fact the exotic origin of fashions seems strongly to favor the exclusiveness of the groups which adopt them. Because of their external origin, these imported fashions create a special and significant form of socialization, which arises through mutual relation to a point without the circle. It sometimes appears as though social elements, just like the axes of vision, converge best at a point that is not too near. The currency, or more precisely the medium of exchange among primitive races, often consists of objects that are brought in from without. On the Solomon Islands, and at Ibo on the Niger, for example, there exists a regular industry for the manufacture of money from shells, etc., which are not employed as a medium of exchange in the place itself, but in neighboring districts, to which they are exported. Paris modes are frequently created with the sole intention of setting a fashion elsewhere.

This motive of foreignness, which fash-

ion employs in its socializing endeavors, is restricted to higher civilization, because novelty, which foreign origin guarantees in extreme form, is often regarded by primitive races as an evil. This is certainly one of the reasons why primitive conditions of life favor a correspondingly infrequent change of fashions. The savage is afraid of strange appearances; the difficulties and dangers that beset his career cause him to scent danger in anything new which he does not understand and which he cannot assign to a familiar category. Civilization, however, transforms this affectation into its very opposite. Whatever is exceptional, bizarre, or conspicuous, or whatever departs from the customary norm, exercises a peculiar charm upon the man of culture, entirely independent of its material justification. The removal of the feeling of insecurity with reference to all things new was accomplished by the progress of civilization. At the same time it may be the old inherited prejudice, [137] although it has become purely formal and unconscious, which, in connection with the present feeling of security, produces this piquant interest in exceptional and odd things. For this reason the fashions of the upper classes develop their power of exclusion against the lower in proportion as general culture advances, at least until the mingling of the classes and the leveling effect of democracy exert a counter-influence.

Fashion plays a more conspicuous *rôle* in modern times, because the differences in our standards of life have become so much more strongly accentuated, for the more numerous and the more sharply drawn these differences are, the greater the opportunities for emphasizing them at every turn. In innumerable instances this cannot be accomplished by passive inactivity, but only by the development of forms established by fashion; and this has become all the more pronounced since legal restrictions prescribing various forms of apparel and modes of life for different classes have been removed.

Two social tendencies are essential to the establishment of fashion, namely, the need of union on the one hand and the need of

isolation on the other. Should one of these be absent, fashion will not be formed—its sway will abruptly end. Consequently the lower classes possess very few modes and those they have are seldom specific; for this reason the modes of primitive races are much more stable than ours. Among primitive races the socializing impulse is much more powerfully developed than the differentiating impulse. For, no matter how decisively the groups may be separated from one another, separation is for the most part hostile in such a way, that the very relation the rejection of which within the classes of civilized races makes fashion reasonable, is absolutely lacking. Segregation by means of differences in clothing, manners, taste, etc., is expedient only where the danger of absorption and obliteration exists, as is the case among highly civilized nations. Where these differences do not exist, where we have an absolute antagonism, as for example between not directly friendly groups of primitive races, the development of fashion has no sense at all.

It is interesting to observe how the prevalence of the socializing impulse in primitive peoples affects various institutions, such as the dance. It has been noted quite generally that the dances of primitive races exhibit a remarkable uniformity in arrangement and rhythm. The dancing group feels and acts like a uniform organism; the dance forces and accustoms a number of individuals, who are usually driven to and fro without rime or reason by vacillating conditions and needs of life, to be guided by a common impulse and a single common motive. Even making allowances for the tremendous difference in the outward appearance of the dance, we are [138] dealing here with the same element that appears in the socializing force of fashion. Movement, time, rhythm of the gestures, are all undoubtedly influenced largely by what is worn: similarly dressed persons exhibit relative similarity in their actions. This is of especial value in modern life with its individualistic diffusion, while in the case of primitive races the effect produced is directed within and is therefore not dependent

upon changes of fashion. Among primitive races fashions will be less numerous and more stable because the need of new impressions and forms of life, quite apart from their social effect, is far less pressing. Changes in fashion reflect the dulness of nervous impulses: the more nervous the age, the more rapidly its fashions change, simply because the desire for differentiation, one of the most important elements of all fashion, goes hand in hand with the weakening of nervous energy. This fact in itself is one of the reasons why the real seat of fashion is found among the upper classes.

Viewed from a purely social standpoint, two neighboring primitive races furnish eloquent examples of the requirement of the two elements of union and isolation in the setting of fashion. Among the Kaffirs the class-system is very strongly developed, and as a result we find there a fairly rapid change of fashions, in spite of the fact that wearing-apparel and adornments are subject to certain legal restrictions. The Bushmen, on the other hand, who have developed no class-system, have no fashions whatsoever,—no one has been able to discover among them any interest in changes in apparel and in finery. Occasionally these negative elements have consciously prevented the setting of a fashion even at the very heights of civilization. It is said that there was no ruling fashion in male attire in Florence about the year 1390, because every one adopted a style of his own. Here the first element, the need of union, was absent; and without it, as we have seen, no fashion can arise. Conversely, the Venetian nobles are said to have set no fashion, for according to law they had to dress in black in order not to call the attention of the lower classes to the smallness of their number. Here there were no fashions because the other element essential for their creation was lacking, a visible differentiation from the lower classes being purposely avoided.

The very character of fashion demands that it should be exercised at one time only by a portion of the given group, the great majority being merely on the road to adopt-

ing it. As soon as an example has been universally adopted, that is, as soon as anything that was originally done only by a few has really come to be practiced by all—as is the case in certain portions of our apparel and in various forms of social conduct—we no longer speak of fashion. As fashion spreads, it gradually goes to its [139] doom. The distinctiveness which in the early stages of a set fashion assures for it a certain distribution is destroyed as the fashion spreads, and as this element wanes, the fashion also is bound to die. By reason of this peculiar play between the tendency towards universal acceptance and the destruction of its very purpose to which this general adoption leads, fashion includes a peculiar attraction of limitation, the attraction of a simultaneous beginning and end, the charm of novelty coupled to that of transitoriness. The attractions of both poles of the phenomena meet in fashion, and show also here that they belong together unconditionally, although, or rather because, they are contradictory in their very nature. Fashion always occupies the dividing-line between the past and the future, and consequently conveys a stronger feeling of the present, at least while it is at its height, than most other phenomena. What we call the present is usually nothing more than a combination of a fragment of the past with a fragment of the future. Attention is called to the present less often than colloquial usage, which is rather liberal in its employment of the word, would lead us to believe.

Few phenomena of social life possess such a pointed curve of consciousness as does fashion. As soon as the social consciousness attains to the highest point designated by fashion, it marks the beginning of the end for the latter. This transitory character of fashion, however, does not on the whole degrade it, but adds a new element of attraction. At all events an object does not suffer degradation by being called fashionable, unless we reject it with disgust or wish to debase it for other, material reasons, in which case, of course, fashion becomes an idea of value. In the practice of life anything else similarly new and suddenly disseminated is



not called fashion, when we are convinced of its continuance and its material justification. If, on the other hand, we feel certain that the fact will vanish as rapidly as it came, then we call it fashion. We can discover one of the reasons why in these latter days fashion exercises such a powerful influence on our consciousness in the circumstance that the great, permanent, unquestionable convictions are continually losing strength, as a consequence of which the transitory and vacillating elements of life acquire more room for the display of their activity. The break with the past, which, for more than a century, civilized mankind has been laboring unceasingly to bring about, makes the consciousness turn more and more to the present. This accentuation of the present evidently at the same time emphasizes the element of change, and a class will turn to fashion in all fields, by no means only in that of apparel, in proportion to the degree in which it supports the given civilizing tendency. It may almost be considered a sign of the increased power of fashion, that it has overstepped the bounds of its original domain, which [140] comprised only personal externals, and has acquired an increasing influence over taste, over theoretical convictions, and even over the moral foundations of life.

From the fact that fashion as such can never be generally in vogue, the individual derives the satisfaction of knowing that as adopted by him it still represents something special and striking, while at the same time he feels inwardly supported by a set of persons who are striving for the same thing, not as in the case of other social satisfactions, by a set actually doing the same thing. The fashionable person is regarded with mingled feelings of approval and envy; we envy him as an individual, but approve of him as a member of a set or group. Yet even this envy has a peculiar coloring. There is a shade of envy which includes a species of ideal participation in the envied object itself. An instructive example of this is furnished by the conduct of the poor man who gets a glimpse of the feast of his rich neighbor. The mo-

ment we envy an object or a person, we are no longer absolutely excluded from it; some relation or other has been established—between both the same psychic content now exists—although in entirely different categories and forms of sensations. This quiet personal usurpation of the envied property contains a kind of antidote, which occasionally counter-acts the evil effects of this feeling of envy. The contents of fashion afford an especially good chance for the development of this conciliatory shade of envy, which also gives to the envied person a better conscience because of his satisfaction over his good fortune. This is due to the fact that these contents are not, as many other psychic contents are, denied absolutely to any one, for a change of fortune, which is never entirely out of the question, may play them into the hands of an individual who had previously been confined to the state of envy.

From all this we see that fashion furnishes an ideal field for individuals with dependent natures, whose self-consciousness, however, requires a certain amount of prominence, attention, and singularity. Fashion raises even the unimportant individual by making him the representative of a class, the embodiment of a joint spirit. And here again we observe the curious intermixture of antagonistic values. Speaking broadly, it is characteristic of a standard set by a general body, that its acceptance by any one individual does not call attention to him; in other words, a positive adoption of a given norm signifies nothing. Whoever keeps the laws the breaking of which is punished by the penal code, whoever lives up to the social forms prescribed by his class, gains no conspicuousness or notoriety. The slightest infraction or opposition, however, is immediately noticed and places the individual in an exceptional position by calling the attention of the public to [141] his action. All such norms do not assume positive importance for the individual until he begins to depart from them. It is peculiarly characteristic of fashion that it renders possible a social obedience, which at the same time is a form

of individual differentiation. Fashion does this because in its very nature it represents a standard that can never be accepted by all. While fashion postulates a certain amount of general acceptance, it nevertheless is not without significance in the characterization of the individual, for it emphasizes his personality not only through omission but also through observance. In the dude the social demands of fashion appear exaggerated to such a degree that they completely assume an individualistic and peculiar character. It is characteristic of the dude that he carries the elements of a particular fashion to an extreme; when pointed shoes are in style, he wears shoes that resemble the prow of a ship; when high collars are all the rage, he wears collars that come up to his ears; when scientific lectures are fashionable, you cannot find him anywhere else, etc., etc. Thus he represents something distinctly individual, which consists in the quantitative intensification of such elements as are qualitatively common property of the given set of class. He leads the way, but all travel the same road. Representing as he does the most recently conquered heights of public taste, he seems to be marching at the head of the general procession. In reality, however, what is so frequently true of the relation between individuals and groups applies also to him: as a matter of fact, the leader allows himself to be led.

Democratic times unquestionably favor such a condition to a remarkable degree, so much so that even Bismarck and other very prominent party leaders in constitutional governments have emphasized the fact that inasmuch as they are leaders of a group, they are bound to follow it. The spirit of democracy causes persons to seek the dignity and sensation of command in this manner; it tends to a confusion and ambiguity of sensations, which fail to distinguish between ruling the mass and being ruled by it. The conceit of the dude is thus the caricature of a confused understanding, fostered by democracy, of the relation between the individual and the public. Undeniably, however, the dude, through the conspicuousness

gained in a purely quantitative way, but expressed in a difference of quality, represents a state of equilibrium between the social and the individualizing impulses which is really original. This explains the extreme to which otherwise thoroughly intelligent and prominent persons frequently resort in matters of fashion, an extreme that outwardly appears so abstruse. It furnishes a combination of relations to things and men, which under ordinary circumstances appear more divided. It is not only the mixture of individual [142] peculiarity with social equality, but, in a more practical vein, as it were, it is the mingling of the sensation of rulership with submission, the influence of which is here at work. In other words, we have here the mixing of a masculine and a feminine principle. The very fact that this process goes on in the field of fashion only in an ideal attenuation, as it were, the fact that only the form of both elements is embodied in a content indifferent in itself, may lend to fashion a special attraction, especially for sensitive natures that do not care to concern themselves with robust reality. From an objective standpoint, life according to fashion consists of a balancing of destruction and upbuilding; its content acquires characteristics by destruction of an earlier form; it possesses a peculiar uniformity, in which the satisfying of the love of destruction and of the demand for positive elements can no longer be separated from each other.

Inasmuch as we are dealing here not with the importance of a single fact or a single satisfaction, but rather with the play between two contents and their mutual distinction, it becomes evident that the same combination which extreme obedience to fashion acquires can be won also by opposition to it. Whoever consciously avoids following the fashion, does not attain the consequent sensation of individualization through any real individual qualification, but rather through mere negation of the social example. If obedience to fashion consists in imitation of such an example, conscious neglect of fashion represents similar imitation, but under an inverse sign. The

latter, however, furnishes just as fair testimony of the power of the social tendency, which demands our dependence in some positive or negative manner. The man who consciously pays no heed to fashion accepts its forms just as much as the dude does, only he embodies it in another category, the former in that of exaggeration, the latter in that of negation. Indeed, it occasionally happens that it becomes fashionable in whole bodies of a large class to depart altogether from the standards set by fashion. This constitutes a most curious social-psychological complication, in which the tendency towards individual conspicuousness primarily rests content with a mere inversion of the social imitation and secondly draws in strength from approximation to a similarly characterized narrower circle. If the club-haters organized themselves into a club, it would not be logically more impossible and psychologically more possible than the above case. Similarly atheism has been made into a religion, embodying the same fanaticism, the same intolerance, the same satisfying of the needs of the soul that are embraced in religion proper. Freedom, likewise, after having put a stop to tyranny, frequently becomes no less tyrannical and arbitrary. So the phenomenon of conscious departure from fashion illustrates [143] how ready the fundamental forms of human character are to accept the total antithesis of contents and to show their strength and their attraction in the negation of the very thing to whose acceptance they seemed a moment before irrevocably committed. It is often absolutely impossible to tell whether the elements of personal strength or of personal weakness preponderate in the group of causes that lead to such a departure from fashion. It may result from a desire not to make common cause with the mass, a desire that has at its basis not independence of the mass, to be sure, but yet an inherently sovereign position with respect to the latter. However, it may be due to a delicate sensibility, which causes the individual to fear that he will be unable to maintain his individuality in case he adopts the forms, the tastes, and the cus-

toms of the general public. Such opposition is by no means always a sign of personal strength.

The fact that fashion expresses and at the same time emphasizes the tendency towards equalization and individualization, and the desire for imitation and conspicuousness, perhaps explains why it is that women, broadly speaking, are its staunchest adherents. Scientific discretion should caution us against forming judgments about woman "in the plural." At the same time it may be said of woman in a general way, whether the statement be justified in every case or not, that her psychological characteristic in so far as it differs from that of man, consists in a lack of differentiation, in a greater similarity among the different members of her sex, in a stricter adherence to the social average. Whether on the final heights of modern culture, the facts of which have not yet furnished a contribution to the formation of this general conviction, there will be a change in the relation between men and women, a change that may result in a complete reversal of the above distinction, I do not care to discuss, inasmuch as we are concerned here with more comprehensive historical averages. The relation and the weakness of her social position, to which woman has been doomed during the far greater portion of history, however, explains her strict regard for custom, for the generally accepted and approved forms of life, for all that is proper. A weak person steers clear of individualization; he avoids dependence upon self with its responsibilities and the necessity of defending himself unaided. He finds protection only in the typical form of life, which prevents the strong from exercising his exceptional powers. But resting on the firm foundation of custom, of what is generally accepted, woman strives anxiously for all the relative individualization and personal conspicuousness that remains.

Fashion furnishes this very combination in the happiest manner, for we have here on the one hand a field of general imitation, the individual floating [144] in the broadest social current, relieved of responsibility for his

tastes and his actions, yet on the other hand we have a certain conspicuousness, an emphasis, an individual accentuation of the personality. It seems that there exists for each class of human beings, probably for each individual, a definite quantitative relation between the tendency towards individualization and the desire to be merged in the group, so that when the satisfying of one tendency is denied in a certain field of life, he seeks another, in which he then fulfills the measure which he requires. Thus it seems as though fashion were the valve through which woman's craving for some measure of conspicuousness and individual prominence finds vent, when its satisfaction is denied her in other fields.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Germany exhibits an unusually strong development of individuality. Great inroads were made upon the collectivistic regulations of the Middle Ages by the freedom of the individual. Woman, however, took no part in this individualistic development: the freedom of personal action and self-improvement were still denied her. She sought redress by adopting the most extravagant and hypertrophic styles in dress. On the other hand, in Italy during the same epoch woman was given full play for the exercise of individuality. The woman of the Renaissance possessed opportunities of culture, of external activity, of personal differentiation such as were not offered her for many centuries thereafter. In the upper classes of society, especially, education and freedom of action were almost identical for both sexes. It is not astonishing, therefore, that no particularly extravagant Italian female fashions should have come down to us from that period. The need of exercising individuality in this field was absent, because the tendency embodied therein found sufficient vent in other spheres. In general the history of woman in the outer as well as the inner life, individually as well as collectively, exhibits such a comparatively great uniformity, leveling and similarity, that she requires a more lively activity at least in the sphere of fashion, which is nothing more nor less than

change, in order to add an attraction to herself and her life for her own feeling as well as for others. Just as in the case of individualism and collectivism, there exists between the uniformity and the change of the contents of life a definite proportion of needs, which is tossed to and fro in the different fields and seeks to balance refusal in one by consent, however acquired, in another. On the whole, we may say that woman is a more faithful creature than man. Now fidelity, expressing as it does the uniformity and regularity of one's nature only in the direction of the feelings, demands a more lively change in the outward surrounding spheres in order to establish the balance in the tendencies of life referred to above. Man, [145] on the other hand, a rather unfaithful being, who does not ordinarily restrict dependence to a relation of the feelings with the same implicitness and concentration of all interests of life to a single one, is consequently less in need of an outward form of change. Non-acceptance of changes in external fields, and indifference towards fashions in outward appearance are specifically a male quality, not because man is the more uniform but because he is the more many-sided creature and for that reason can get along better without such outward changes. Therefore, the emancipated woman of the present, who seeks to imitate in the good as well as perhaps also in the bad sense the whole differentiation, personality and activity of the male sex, lays particular stress on her indifference to fashion.

In a certain sense fashion gives woman a compensation for her lack of position in a class based on a calling or profession. The man who has become absorbed in a calling has entered a relatively uniform class, within which he resembles many others, and is thus often only an illustration of the conception of this class or calling. On the other hand, as though to compensate him for this absorption, he is invested with the full importance and the objective as well as social power of this class. To his individual importance is added that of his class, which often covers the defects and deficiencies of his purely per-

sonal character. The individuality of the class often supplements or replaces that of the member. This identical thing fashion accomplishes with other means. Fashion also supplements a person's lack of importance, his inability to individualize his existence purely by his own unaided efforts, by enabling him to join a set characterized and singled out in the public consciousness by fashion alone. Here also, to be sure, the personality as such is reduced to a general formula, yet this formula itself, from a social standpoint, possesses an individual tinge, and thus makes up through the social way what is denied to the personality in a purely individual way. The fact that the demi-monde is so frequently a pioneer in matters of fashion, is due to its peculiarly uprooted form of life. The pariah existence to which society condemns the demi-monde, produces an open or latent hatred against everything that has the sanction of law, of every permanent institution, a hatred that finds its relatively most innocent and aesthetic expression in the striving for ever new forms of appearance. In this continual striving for new, previously unheard-of fashions, in the regardlessness with which the one that is most diametrically opposed to the existing one is passionately adopted, there lurks an aesthetic expression of the desire for destruction, which seems to be an element peculiar to all that lead this pariah-like existence, so long as they are not completely enslaved within. [146]

When we examine the final and most subtle impulses of the soul, which it is difficult to express in words, we find that they also exhibit this antagonistic play of the fundamental human tendencies. These latter seek to regain their continually lost balance by means of ever new proportions, and they succeed here through the reflection which fashion occasionally throws into the most delicate and tender spiritual processes. Fashion insists, to be sure, on treating all individualities alike, yet it is always done in such a way that one's whole nature is never affected. Fashion always continues to be regarded as something external, even in

spheres outside of mere styles of apparel, for the form of mutability in which it is presented to the individual is under all circumstances a contrast to the stability of the ego-feeling. Indeed, the latter, through this contrast, must become conscious of its relative duration. The changeableness of those contents can express itself as mutability and develop its attraction only through this enduring element. But for this very reason fashion always stands, as I have pointed out, at the periphery of personality, which regards itself as a *pièce de résistance* for fashion, or at least can do so when called upon.

It is this phase of fashion that is received by sensitive and peculiar persons, who use it as a sort of mask. They consider blind obedience to the standards of the general public in all externals as the conscious and desired means of reserving their personal feeling and their taste, which they are eager to reserve for themselves alone, in such a way that they do not care to enter in an appearance that is visible to all. It is therefore a feeling of modesty and reserve which causes many a delicate nature to seek refuge in the leveling cloak of fashion; such individuals do not care to resort to a peculiarity in externals for fear of perhaps betraying a peculiarity of their innermost soul. We have here a triumph of the soul over the actual circumstances of existence, which must be considered one of the highest and finest victories, at least as far as form is concerned, for the reasons that the enemy himself is transformed into a servant, and that the very thing which the personality seemed to suppress is voluntarily seized, because the leveling suppression is here transferred to the external spheres of life in such a way that it furnishes a veil and a protection for everything spiritual and now all the more free. This corresponds exactly to the triviality of expression and conversation through which very sensitive and retiring people, especially women, often deceive one about the individual depth of the soul. It is one of the pleasures of the judge of human nature, although somewhat cruel withal, to feel the anxiousness with which woman clings to the com-

monplace contents and forms of social intercourse. The impossibility of enticing her beyond the most banal and trite forms of expression, [147] which often drives one to despair, in innumerable instances signifies nothing more than a barricade of the soul, an iron mask that conceals the real features and can furnish this service only by means of a wholly uncompromising separation of the feelings and the externals of life.

All feeling of shame rests upon isolation of the individual; it arises whenever stress is laid upon the *ego*, whenever the attention of a circle is drawn to such an individual—in reality or only in his imagination—which at the same time is felt to be in some way incongruous. For that reason retiring and weak natures particularly incline to feelings of shame. The moment they step into the centre of general attention, the moment they make themselves conspicuous in any way, a painful oscillation between emphasis and withdrawal of the *ego* becomes manifest. Inasmuch as the individual departure from a generality as the source of the feeling of shame is quite independent of the particular content upon the basis of which it occurs, one is frequently ashamed of good and noble things. The fact that the commonplace is good form in society in the narrower sense of the term, is due not only to a mutual regard, which causes it to be considered bad taste to make one's self conspicuous through some individual, singular expression that not every one can repeat, but also to the fear of that feeling of shame which as it were forms a self-inflicted punishment for the departure from the form and activity similar for all and equally accessible to all. By reason of its peculiar inner structure, fashion furnishes a departure of the individual, which is always looked upon as proper. No matter how extravagant the form of appearance or manner of expression, as long as it is fashionable, it is protected against those painful reflections which the individual otherwise experiences when he becomes the object of attention. All concerted actions are characterized by the loss of this feeling of shame. As a member of a mass the individual will do many things

which would have aroused unconquerable repugnance in his soul had they been suggested to him alone. It is one of the strangest social-psychological phenomena, in which this characteristic of concerted action is well exemplified, that many fashions tolerate breaches of modesty which, if suggested to the individual alone, would be angrily repudiated. But as dictated of fashion they find ready acceptance. The feeling of shame is eradicated in matters of fashion, because it represents a united action, in the same way that the feeling of responsibility is extinguished in the participants of a crime committed by a mob, each member of which, if left to himself, would shrink from violence.

Fashion also is only one of the forms by the aid of which men seek to save their inner freedom all the more completely by sacrificing externals to enslavement by the general public. Freedom and dependence also belong to [148] those antagonistic pairs, whose ever renewed strife and endless mobility give to life much more piquancy and permit of a much greater breadth and development, than a permanent, unchangeable balance of the two could give. Schopenhauer held that each person's cup of life is filled with a certain quantity of joy and woe, and that this measure can neither remain empty nor be filled to overflowing, but only changes its form in all the differentiations and vacillations of internal and external relations. In the same way and much less mystically we may observe in each period, in each class, and in each individual, either a really permanent proportion of dependence and freedom, or at least the longing for it, whereas we can only change the fields over which they are distributed. It is the task of the higher life, to be sure, to arrange this distribution in such a way that the other values of existence require thereby the possibility of the most favorable development. The same quantity of dependence and freedom may at one time help to increase the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic values to the highest point and at another time, without any change in quantity but merely in dis-

tribution, it may bring about the exact opposite of this success. Speaking broadly, we may say that the most favorable result for the aggregate value of life will be obtained when all unavoidable dependence is transferred more and more to the periphery, to the externals of life. Perhaps Goethe, in his later period, is the most eloquent example of a wholly great life, for by means of his adaptability in all externals, his strict regard for form, his willing obedience to the conventions of society, he attained a maximum of inner freedom, a complete saving of the centres of life from the touch of the unavoidable quantity of dependence. In this respect fashion is also a social form of marvelous expediency, because, like the law, it affects only the externals of life, only those sides of life which are turned to society. It provides us with a formula by means of which we can unequivocally attest our dependence upon what is generally adopted, our obedience to the standards established by our time, our class, and our narrower circle, and enables us to withdraw the freedom given us in life from externals and concentrate it more and more in our innermost natures.

Within the individual soul the relations of equalizing unification and individual demarcation are to a certain extent repeated. The antagonism of the tendencies which produces fashion is transferred as far as form is concerned in an entirely similar manner also to those inner relations of many individuals, who have nothing whatever to do with social obligations. The instances to which I have just referred exhibit the oft-mentioned parallelism with which the relations between individuals are repeated in the correlation between the psychic elements of the individual himself. With more [149] or less intention the individual often establishes a mode of conduct or a style for himself, which by reason of the rhythm of its rise, sway, and decline becomes characterized in fashion. Young people especially often exhibit a sudden strangeness in behavior; an unexpected, objectively unfounded interest arises and governs their whole sphere of consciousness, only to dis-

appear in the same irrational manner. We might call this a personal fashion, which forms an analogy to social fashion. The former is supported on the one hand by the individual demand for differentiation and thereby attests to the same impulse that is active in the formation of social fashion. The need of imitation, of similarity, of the blending of the individual in the mass, are here satisfied purely within the individual himself, namely through the concentration of the personal consciousness upon this one form or content, as well as through the imitation of his own self, as it were, which here takes the place of imitation of others. Indeed, we might say that we attain in this case an even more pronounced concentration, an even more intimate support of the individual contents of life by a central uniformity than we do where the fashion is common property.

A certain intermediate stage is often realized within narrow circles between individual mode and personal fashion. Ordinary persons frequently adopt some expression, which they apply at every opportunity—in common with as many as possible in the same set—to all manner of suitable or unsuitable objects. In one respect this is a group fashion, yet in another respect it is really individual, for its express purpose consists in having the individual make the totality of his circle of ideas subject to this formula. Brutal violence is hereby committed against the individuality of things; all variation is destroyed by the curious supremacy of this one category of expressions, for example, when we designate all things that happen to please us for any reason whatsoever as "*chic*," or "*smart*," even though the objects in question may bear no relation whatsoever to the fields to which these expressions belong. In this manner the inner world of the individual is made subject to fashion, and thus reflects the aspects of the external group governed by fashion, chiefly by reason of the objective absurdity of such individual manners, which illustrate the power of the formal, unifying element over the objective rational element. In the

same way many persons and circles only ask that they be uniformly governed, without thinking to inquire into the nature or value of the authority. It cannot be denied that inasmuch as violence is done to objects treated in this way, and inasmuch as they are all transformed uniformly to a category of our own making, the individual really renders an arbitrary decision with respect to these objects, he acquires an individual feeling of power, and thus the *ego* is strongly emphasized. [150]

The fact that appears here in the light of a caricature is everywhere noticeable to a less pronounced degree in the relation of persons to things. Only the noblest persons seek the greatest depth and power of their *ego* by respecting the individuality inherent in things. The hostility which the soul bears to the supremacy, independence, and indifference of the universe gives rise—beside the loftiest and most valuable strivings of humanity—to attempts to oppress things externally; the *ego* offers violence to them not by absorbing and molding their powers, not by recognizing their individuality only to make it serviceable, but by forcing it to bow outwardly to some subjective formula. To be sure the *ego* has not in reality gained control of the things, but only of its own false and fanciful conception of them. The feeling of power, however, which originates thus, betrays its lack of foundation and its fanciful origin by the rapidity with which such expressions pass by. It is just as illusionary as the feeling of the uniformity of being, which springs for the moment from this formulating of all expressions. As a matter of fact the man who carries out a schematic similarity of conduct under all circumstances is by no means the most consistent, the one asserting the *ego* most regularly against the universe. On account of the difference in the given factors of life, a difference of conduct will be essential whenever the same germ of the *ego* is to prevail uniformly over all, just as identical answers in a calculation into which two factors enter, of which one continually varies, cannot be secured if the other remains unchanged, but

only if the latter undergoes variations corresponding to the changes of the former.

We have seen that in fashion the different dimensions of life, so to speak, acquire a peculiar convergence, that fashion is a complex structure in which all the leading antithetical tendencies of the soul are represented in one way or another. This will make clear that the total rhythm in which the individuals and the groups move will exert an important influence also upon their relation to fashion, that the various strata of a group, altogether aside from their different contents of life and external possibilities, will bear different relations to fashion simply because their contents of life are evolved either in conservative or in rapidly varying form. On the one hand the lower classes are difficult to put in motion and they develop slowly. A very clear and instructive example of this may be found in the attitude of the lower classes in England towards the Danish and the Norman conquests. On the whole the changes brought about affected the upper classes only; in the lower classes we find such a degree of fidelity to arrangements and forms of life that the whole continuity of English life which was retained through all those national vicissitudes rests entirely upon the persistence and immovable conservatism of the lower classes. The [151] upper classes, however, were most intensely affected and transformed by new influences, just as the upper branches of a tree are most responsive to the movements of the air. The highest classes, as everyone knows, are the most conservative, and frequently enough they are even archaic. They dread every motion and change, not because they have an antipathy for the contents or because the latter are injurious to them, but simply because it is change and because they regard every modification of the whole, as suspicious and dangerous. No change can bring them additional power, and every change can give them something to fear, but nothing to hope for. The real variability of historical life is therefore vested in the middle classes, and for this reason the history of social and cultural movements has fallen into



an entirely different pace since the *tiers état* assumed control. For this reason fashion, which represents the variable and contrasting forms of life, has since then become much broader and more animated, and also because of the transformation in the immediate political life, for man requires an ephemeral tyrant the moment he has rid himself of the absolute and permanent one. The frequent change of fashion represents a tremendous subjugation of the individual and in that respect forms one of the essential complements of the increased social and political freedom. A form of life, for the contents of which the moment of acquired height marks the beginning of decline, belongs to a class which is inherently much more variable, much more restless in its rhythms than the lowest classes with their dull, unconscious conservatism, and the highest classes with their consciously desired conservatism. Classes and individuals who demand constant change, because the rapidity of their development gives them the advantage over others, find in fashion something that keeps pace with their own soul-movements. Social advance above all is favorable to the rapid change of fashion, for it capacitates lower classes so much for imitation of upper ones, and thus the process characterized above, according to which every higher set throws aside a fashion the moment a lower set adopts it, has acquired a breadth and activity never dreamed of before.

This fact has important bearing on the content of fashion. Above all else it brings in its train a reduction in the cost and extravagance of fashions. In earlier times there was a compensation for the costliness of the first acquisition or the difficulties in transforming conduct and taste in the longer duration of their sway. The more an article becomes subject to rapid changes of fashion, the greater the demand for *cheap* products of its kind, not only because the larger and therefore poorer classes nevertheless have enough purchasing power to regulate industry and demand objects, which [152] at least bear the outward semblance of style, but

also because even the higher circles of society could not afford to adopt the rapid changes in fashion forced upon them by the imitation of the lower circles, if the objects were not relatively cheap. The rapidity of the development is of such importance in actual articles of fashion that it even withdraws them from certain advances of economy gradually won in other fields. It has been noticed, especially in the older branches of modern productive industry, that the speculative element gradually ceases to play an influential *rôle*. The movements of the market can be better overlooked, requirements can be better foreseen and production can be more accurately regulated than before, so that the rationalization of production makes greater and greater inroads on chance conjunctures, on the aimless vacillation of supply and demand. Only pure articles of fashion seem to prove an exception. The polar oscillations, which modern economics in many instances knows how to avoid and from which it is visibly striving towards entirely new economic orders and forms, still hold sway in the field immediately subject to fashion. The element of feverish change is so essential here that fashion stands, as it were, in a logical contrast to the tendencies for development in modern economics.

In contrast to this characteristic, however, fashion possesses this peculiar quality, that every individual type to a certain extent makes its appearance as though it intended to live forever. When we furnish a house these days, intending the articles to last a quarter of a century, we invariably invest in furniture designed according to the very latest patterns and do not even consider articles in vogue two years before. Yet it is evident that the attraction of fashion will desert the present article just as it left the earlier one, and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with both forms is determined by other material criterions. A peculiar psychological process seems to be at work here in addition to the mere bias of the moment. Some fashion always exists and fashion *per se* is indeed immortal, which fact seems to

affect in some manner or other each of its manifestations, although the very nature of each individual fashion stamps it as being transitory. The fact that change itself does not change, in this instance endows each of the objects which it affects with a psychological appearance of duration.

This apparent duration becomes real for the different fashion-contents within the change itself in the following special manner. Fashion, to be sure, is concerned only with change, yet like all phenomena it tends to conserve energy; it endeavors to attain its objects as completely as possible, but nevertheless with the relatively most economical means. For this very reason, fashion repeatedly returns to old forms, as is illustrated particularly in wearing-apparel; and the course of fashion has been likened to a circle. [153] As soon as an earlier fashion has partially been forgotten there is no reason why it should not be allowed to return to favor and why the charm of difference, which constitutes its very essence, should not be permitted to exercise an influence similar to that which it exerted conversely some time before.

The power of the moving form upon which fashion lives is not strong enough to subject every fact uniformly. Even in the fields governed by fashion, all forms are not equally suited to become fashion, for the peculiar character of many of them furnishes a certain resistance. This may be compared with the unequal relation that the objects of external perception bear to the possibility of their being transformed into works of art. It is a very enticing opinion, but one that cannot hold water, that every real object is equally suited to become the object of a work of art. The forms of art, as they have developed historically—constantly determined by chance, frequently one-sided and affected by technical perfections and imperfections—by no means occupy a neutral height above all world objects. On the contrary, the forms of art bear a closer relation to some facts than they do to others. Many objects assume artistic form without apparent effort, as though nature had created

them for that very purpose, while others, as though wilful and supported by nature, avoid all transformation into the given forms of art. The sovereignty of art over reality by no means implies, as naturalism and many theories of idealism so steadfastly maintain, the ability to draw all the contents of existence uniformly into its sphere. None of the forms by which the human mind masters the material of existence and adapts it to its purpose is so general and neutral that all objects, indifferent as they are to their own structure, should uniformly conform to it.

Thus fashion can to all appearances and *in abstracto* absorb any chosen content: any given form of clothing, of art, of conduct, of opinion may become fashionable. And yet many forms in their deeper nature show a special disposition to live themselves out in fashion, just as others offer inward resistance. Thus, for example, everything that may be termed "classic" is comparatively far removed from fashion and alien to it, although occasionally, of course, the classic also falls under the sway of fashion. The nature of the classic is determined by a concentration of the parts around a fixed centre; classic objects possess an air of composure, which does not offer so many points of attack, as it were, from which modification, disturbance, destruction of the equilibrium might emanate. Concentration of the limbs is characteristic of classic plastics: the *tout ensemble* is absolutely governed from within, the spirit and the feeling of life governing the whole [154] embrace uniformly every single part, because of the perceptible unity of the object. That is the reason we speak of the classic repose of Greek art. It is due exclusively to the concentration of the object, which concentration permits no part to bear any relation to any extraneous powers and fortunes and thereby incites the feeling that this formation is exempt from the changing influences of general life. In contrast to this everything odd, extreme and unusual will be drawn to fashion from within: fashion does not take hold of such characteristic things as an external fate, but rather as the historical

expression of their material peculiarities. The widely projecting limbs in baroque-statues seem to be in perpetual danger of being broken off, the inner life of the figure does not exercise complete control over them, but turns them over a prey to the chance influences of external life. Baroque forms in themselves lack repose, they seem ruled by chance and subjected to the momentary impulse, which fashion expresses as a form of social life. But still another factor confronts us here, namely, that we soon grow tired of eccentric, bizarre or fanciful forms and from a purely physiological standpoint long for the change that fashion outlines for us.

I have had occasion to point out above that the *tempo* of fashion depends upon the loss of sensibility to nervous incitements which are formed by the individual disposition. The latter changes with the ages, and combines with the form of the objects in an inextricable mutual influence. We find here also one of the deep relations which we thought to have discovered between the classical and the "natural" composition of things. The conception of what is included in the term natural is rather vague and misleading, for as a rule it is merely an expression of value, which is employed to grace values prized for different reasons, and which has therefore been uniformly supported by the most antagonistic elements. At the same time, we may limit the term "natural" from a negative standpoint by a process of exclusion, inasmuch as certain forms, impulses and conceptions can certainly lay no claim to the term; and these are the forms that succumb most rapidly to the changes of fashion, because they lack that relation to the fixed centre of things and of life which justifies the claim to permanent

existence. Thus Elizabeth Charlotte of the Palatinate, a sister-in-law of Louis XIV, exceedingly masculine in her ways, inspired the fashion at the French Court of women acting like men and being addressed as such, whereas the men conducted themselves like women. It is self-evident that such behavior can be countenanced by fashion only because it is far removed from that never-absent substance of human relations to which the form of life must eventually return in some way, shape, or manner. We cannot claim that all fashion is unnatural, because the existence of fashion itself seems perfectly [155] natural to us as social beings, yet we can say, conversely, that absolutely unnatural forms may at least for a time bear the stamp of fashion.

To sum up, the peculiarly piquant and suggestive attraction of fashion lies in the contrast between its extensive, all-embracing distribution and its rapid and complete disintegration; and with the latter of these characteristics the apparent claim to permanent acceptance again stands in contrast. Furthermore, fashion depends no less upon the narrow distinctions it draws for a given circle, the intimate connection of which it expresses in the terms of both cause and effect, than it does upon the decisiveness with which it separates the given circle from others. And, finally, fashion is based on adoption by a social set, which demands mutual imitation from its members and thereby releases the individual of all responsibility—ethical and aesthetic—as well as of the possibility of producing within these limits individual accentuation and original shading of the elements of fashion. Thus fashion is shown to be an objective characteristic grouping upon equal terms by social expediency of the antagonistic tendencies of life.